2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

calca and Badulla. The largest Veddah population is in the former district, and these are they of whom Tennent principally writes, but they are by no means the wildest specimens of the race. They have not maintained so complete an isolation from other races as those I am about to describe, and consequently are not worthy of the same attention.*

It is the "Wilder Sort" of Veddahs, as Knox calls them, of whom I desire to place on record an accurate description, before they quite pass away and are forgotten.

They roam about through the park-like district of Nilgala, which presents, of its kind, perhaps the loveliest scenery in this beautiful island, and wander among the forests of Bintenne—that "Land of Bintan all covered with mighty woods and filled with abundance of deer", where Knox tells us these dreaded "Wild Men" dwelt.

It would be difficult to conceive more barbarous types of the human race than they present. Yet there are degrees even in *their* barbarism, for those of Nilgala are wilder than their brethren of Bintenne. They are fewer in number, and more diminutive in stature. They are distributed through their lovely country in small septs, or families, occupying generally caves in the rocks, though some have little bark huts. They depend almost solely on hunting for their support,† and hold little communication even with each other.

Few in number as they are,—they did not exceed seventy-two persons in 1858,—still no other human beings are to be found for many miles round their habitations, and this seclusion has caused them to retain peculiarities which are fast disappearing, or have already disappeared from among even the wildest of Bintenne.‡

There, there are both wild and settled Veddahs. Of the latter

* See Tennent's remarks on the late Mr. Atherton's praiseworthy and successful labours in civilizing the Veddahs of the Batticaloa district, where there are now only some two hundred and fifty who, having resisted all his efforts to improve them, still live in caves near the rock called Gunner's Quoin, and in Palla Palata of the Batticaloa Bintenna. I have been in communication with Mr. Birch, the present agent for government in that district, and, from specimens of their *patois* which he sent me, and which greatly resembles the Singhalese usually spoken, in those very words in which, in the Badulla district, the Veddah dialect differs from it, I am justified in describing them as having had, in some period of their history, more intercourse with the Singhalese than those of whom I am writing.

† Solely till 1855, when I succeeded in inducing them to turn their attention to cultivation; but they much prefer their own wild life, and their cultivation is very limited.

‡ In using the term Bintenne, I refer to that portion of the division of Bintenne which belongs to the Badulla district. A larger portion of the same division is in Batticaloa.

2:Bailey G-5 (ca, 1854) 1863
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But dogs are still prized by the Veddah. Of all his possessions, he values most his bow, which is placed under his head when he sleeps; and next in his estimation is the dog who guards it, sleeping always at his master's head. "What would you do," I asked a Veddah once, "if your bow were stolen?" "No one could steal it," he replied; "the dog would not let him." "But if any one killed your dog." His answer was significant. He clutched his axe, and made a motion as though he would cut down the man who did so. 231 422 [685]

And this was no idle threat. In 1849, a Bintenne Veddah deliberately knocked a man's brains out, for having, as he believed, killed two of his dogs by magic.* He never attempted to deny what he had done. "It is true," he said at the coroner's inquest, "I killed him, and I did so because he had killed, by witchcraft, the two dogs I had reared and hunted with for my support." He added, as quite a secondary justification, that the murdered man had also practised his magic arts on himself. He detailed, with great minuteness, how he lay wait for him, and how, while he, with his wife and child, was resting in the shade, he watched his opportunity, and felled him with a club: and—strong evidence of the proverbial truthfulness of the Veddahs—he described how, by his influence (he was the head man of one of the small tribes), he intimidated the widow and father of his victim, and so kept the murder secret for some days. 678 685 [754]

None but the woman saw the deed; and had falsehood been the normal characteristic of the Veddahs, as I fear it is with too many of their more civilized compatriots, he would probably have escaped punishment. He was tried and convicted of murder, but the sentence of death was commuted to several years imprisonment. It was hoped that, having received some instructions in goal, he might carry back with him some little civilization to his own people. 648

But imprisonment was to him a greater punishment than death. He pined away in confinement, and was released to save his life. I have often seen him in Bintenne. Civilization has not done much for him. He differs from his brethren only in having acquired a taste for jewelry, for he wears with apparent pride, a tawdry brass chain round his waist. [301]

The Veddahs eat the flesh of elk,† deer, monkeys, pigs, the iguana, and pengolin—all flesh, indeed, but that of oxen, elephants, 262

* The murdered man was not a Veddah, but a low-country vagrant; several of whom have, of late years, taken up their abode near the Bintenne Veddahs, to their great annoyance.

† What is commonly termed an elk in Ceylon, is the Samba deer (*rusa Aristotelis*). [136]

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

235 Of fowls, I observed a remarkable diversity of breed. They may be classed as—

(*a*) The Bantam type, with the medium length of saddle and conspicuous *erect* tail.

(*b*) The wild type, with long saddle and large *drooping* tail.

(*c*) The Cochin-China type, with feathered tarsi.

In the first of these the crow of the cocks is quite distinct, it being what I call a shrill falsetto. In (*b*), what I call the wild type, the plumage of the males approximates that of our jungle fowl, both in its beauty of colouring and in the disposition of the tail feathers. The hens, too, were more commonly brown than in the Bantam type, where white is the prevailing colour of this sex. In (*c*) the feathered leg is the outstanding characteristic. Here the size of bird is larger than in the first group, but shorter in the back than in what I call the wild type. In no case did I find birds with yellow combs, though the early presence of the comb in cock chickens is particularly noticeable. It would appear, therefore, that the domestic fowl has here developed characteristics that would imply crossing from three stocks, one of which is analogous to, if not identical with, the wild bird. On the other hand, the unmistakable crow of the wild bird is different from that of any of the village races.

136 Of wild animals, the following is a brief list of observed mammalia:—

(1) *The Gray Wanderoo.*—Scarce in the Maha Wedirata, plentiful towards the sea coast in the Panawa Pattu and in the valley of the Kumbukkan river. Probably this species was common all through the Vedda country, but as its flesh was eaten it became exterminated, except in uninhabited places.

(2) *The "Red Monkey" or Bilawa* (Macacus pileatus).—Not common. I found a few in the valley of the Heda-oya and near Lahugala.

(3) *The Loris* (Loris gracilis).—Very rare. I did not see a single example, but I was told by the people that it was known near the "Westminster Abbey" range of hills, and again near Monaragala.

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

(4) *Leopard* (Felis pardus).—Common. I constantly came upon the tracks of the leopard in all parts of the Vedda country, except very far away from water. 136

(5) *Indian Civet* (Viverricula malaccensis).—Occasional.

(6) *Mungoos* (Herpestes mungo).—Very common, usually pale coloured.

(7) *Jackal* (Canis aureus).—Very common all through the Vedda country, and probably crosses with the domestic dog. It is commonly believed that the jackal conveys rinderpest, owing to its devouring cattle that have died of that disease. I secured a jackal pup out of a hollow scrapod at the foot of a Mustard tree (*Salvadora persica*). The little creature at first showed considerable timidity, but rapidly got over this shyness. Finding a difficulty in providing it with food I had it put back at the place where it was captured. It soon ran off, apparently led by its mother, as I found the spot afterwards to be completely unoccupied.

(8) *Indian Otter* (Lutra nair).—I found the marks of this animal on the Kumbukkan river, but nowhere else. It is well known by the name of Diya-balla, so that I cannot suppose it is rare.

(9) *Bear* (Melursinus ursinus).—Common. I found foot-prints of bear in the driest parts of the country that I explored, and in places where I could find but few other traces of animals. The fruits of the Palu (*Mimusops hexandra*) and Wira (*Hemicyclia sepiaria*) are readily devoured by bears, who in this way to some extent spread the growth of these plants. I am informed by the people that direct attacks upon human beings by bears are uncommon, and that when injuries have occurred the animal has invariably been startled. Thus, I was told that hollow trees should be approached with caution, as a bear roused suddenly from its sleep within might with equal likelihood spring upon, as away from, its disturber.

Near Nahmaluwahela, on a rocky mass, I found a dead bear. He appeared to have fallen from the rock above on to a ledge below which there was a still larger drop, and being maimed was unable to get up or down from the spot where I found the body.

4: Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

136 (10) *Musk Rat* (Crocidura cœrulea).—Very uncommon. I found it at Potuvil only.

(11) *Flying Fox* (Pteropus medius).—I can only remember seeing this bat once in the Buttala-Wedirata.

(12) *Bats*.—I did not shoot any, so am unable to specifically name those that I saw, which included—

(*a*) The cave bat;
(*b*) The house bat;
(*c*) A small brown bat, locally called "Kiri-wawula"—a most active species; and
(*d*) A gray bat—probably the Indian Vampire.

The first of these is found in great abundance in caves, but I did not find them as widely distributed as the last three.

I noticed when lying on my camp bed at night under trees that the brown bat would hover quite close to my face. I tried the experiment of lying still with my feet uncovered, to see if they would attack the exposed limb, but beyond hovering within a few inches of me they did no harm.

(13) *The Rock Squirrel* (Sciurus macrurus).—Common, away from habitations, as it has been shot down for food. On the Kumbukkan I found it plentiful, while at Bowela, Danakiri-gama, and Manawela it is distinctly rare. The black variety is perhaps a little more rare than the gray.

(14) *Palm Squirrel* (Sc. palmarum).—Not generally common, and appears to follow human distribution. It is more plentiful near Muppane than at Bowela.

(15) A *Jungle Squirrel*, probably Sc. tristriatus, was seen by me at the base of the "Westminster Abbey" hills. It is readily distinguishable from the last by being a dark slate-coloured animal, with bright chestnut stripes. It is usually solitary.

(16) *Rats* are not very plentiful from my observations, except at Kumuna.

(17) *Bandicoot* (Nesocia bandicota).—I repeatedly heard of this animal as being very destructive to chena crops, but I did not actually see one. It is said to be eaten as freely as the mouse deer.

(18) *Porcupine* (Hystrix leucura).—Uncommon. I found traces of it on the banks of the Kumbukkan river and at

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

Siyambala-anduwa, but the people do not speak of it as common. 136

(19) *Hare* (Lepus nigricollis).—Common.

(20) *Elephant* (Elephas maximus).—I came on elephants frequently, but as regards their abundance or the reverse, it appears to be a matter of water distribution; thus, near the Kumbukkan river, the Heda-oya, and Kurapan-oya one would find abundant traces, or, as I did, the animals themselves. As soon as the country gets dried up in the south-west monsoon the distribution ceases to be general, and the places where elephants will be found is only within reach of water. Directly the rains begin and the fresh grass springs up—as it does do with remarkable rapidity—elephants may be found in all parts, so that it might be said that there is a distinct symptom of migration. I entirely disagree with the opinion, frequently expressed, that "elephants are on the increase"; on the contrary, I believe the opposite to be the case. The elephant has to-day a much more restricted area to wander in than it had a hundred years ago. This area, by the cultural operations of man, is yearly being shrunk up, while shooting for "sport" and kraaling still further lessen the numbers of these magnificent animals. The ease with which one can get an elephant proclaimed a "rogue" adds another to the many causes of its destruction, not to mention the facilities that have in the last twenty years been offered to certain Chiefs to have kraals, the few survivors of which do not breed in captivity. It is only a matter of time for the elephant to be completely exterminated in Ceylon, unless steps are taken, with the aid of suitable sanctuaries, in addition to the complete prohibition of kraaling, except at intervals of, say, twenty years, to prevent this disaster. The actual damage done by elephants is not to be compared with their value as transport animals, and nothing can be more deplorable than allowing such valuable creatures to be shot in the cause of so-called "sport."

(21) *Buffalo* (Bos bubalus).—I found these to be generally distributed in the country I traversed, but not nearly in the same numbers as I found them in 1906. I found many skeletons—usually much devoured—of buffaloes, all pointing

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

136 to the fact that rinderpest had destroyed numbers of these creatures. I am informed that in the Panawa Pattu alone that disease killed the wild and tame buffalo alike, and that thousands died in a few months. I found one herd on the Kumbukkan in which I counted some thirty individuals, while in 1906, on the Gajabahu plain, I counted in a single herd over one hundred.

(22) *Sambur* (Cervus unicolor).—Moderately common.

(23) *Spotted Deer* (C. axis).—Common, especially in the valley of the Kumbukkan river. I repeatedly came on herds in this river, in one case finding over 200 drinking in the stream at noon.

(24) *Mouse Deer* (Tragulus meminna).—Moderately common, but more so in the south.

(25) *Wild Pig* (Sus cristatus).—Fairly common, but much less abundant than in 1906, owing to their having been killed out by rinderpest.

(26) *Pangolin* (Manis pentadactyla).—I found traces of this animal occasionally, and by inquiry I heard frequently of its occurrence. It is, however, not common near the coast.

Of reptiles, the crocodile is plentiful where there is water, either in tanks, rivers, or backwaters towards the sea, as, for instance, at Setawe, and all up the Kumbukkan river I found these creatures in abundance.

The *Monitor* or *Talla-goya* is fairly plentiful. It is eaten by both Tamils and the Sinhalese of this locality. I am inclined to believe that there is a dark and a pale race of this species, as I remarked that the latter were much more numerous towards the sea coast, and much lighter coloured than examples obtained near Muppane.

The *Kabaragoya* is comparatively rare. I only saw one or two examples near Muppane. This scarcity I attribute entirely to the absence of water all the year round.

On the north bank of the Kumbukkan I found a (?) Ceratophora in considerable abundance. These animals are protectively marked, and usually select trees with dark rugged bark to take up their position upon, their own colouring assimilating precisely with that of the bark. Under sexual stimulus in the males the lips become a rich crimson red, with

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

large rhomboidal dorsal patches of the same bright colour. On the stimulus diminishing, these points of colour become a dull ashen gray, turning to a pale horny gray with death. The females have similar markings, only in a very inconspicuous degree. 136

I failed to find any examples of this reptile in the north or west of the country to which this Paper refers.

The so-called Chameleon I found no examples of. I obtained a green Calotis, and two examples of Gecko, one about seven inches in length.

Of snakes I only saw three species, viz., the Rat Snake (*Zamenis mucosus*), Russell's Viper (*Vipera russelli*), and the Green Whip-snake (*Dryophis mycterizans*). I specially looked for Cobras, but without success. Russell's Viper, on the other hand, is comparatively common.

As regards the bird distribution, I have thought it desirable to supply a list* in which I have detailed the distribution, as it is of interest to note the exact localities for future reference.

Before passing to this list I would draw attention to certain points of special interest that appear to me to be worthy of more than a brief catalogue notice.

The curious distribution of one Fan-tailed Flycatcher (*Rhipidura albifrontata*) is singular. I found it did not occur east of Monaragala or north of Kebilitte, though in 1906 I found it breeding freely at Pottuvil. On my present exploration I observed it at a place called Kobaragoda, south of Okanda in Panawa Pattu, and from thence still further south to Kumuna, on the Kumbukkan river. It was not seen north of Siyambala-anduwa, nor in any part of the country round the "Westminster Abbey" hills, thus indicating a piece of country of limited extent touching the sea south of Okanda and forming a strip running into Monaragala. From here it passes to the Lunagalla hills, and thence right up to Bandarawela and into Haputale, where it may be found up to 4,000 feet.

I have found it resting at Miriabedde estate, at about 3,800 feet altitude. Again I have found it in abundance in the

* Appendix G.

4: Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

136 Wallawe valley below Kaltotta, and from there it spreads into the Tangalla District, and again at Tellijjawella and Henegama in the Matara District, where the rainfall exceeds 100 inches per annum. Briefly, therefore, it is to be found both in the dry and wet zones. It breeds at sea level, and at over 3,500 feet it is common in "park" country as well as in "chena" country. I am not acquainted with a more remarkable distribution—remarkable for its contradictions—of any Ceylon land bird.

Of the Woodpeckers—*Pici*—both *Chrysocolaptes stricklandi* and *Brachypternus erythronotus*—are common in the Vedda country, but chiefly in damp forest areas, where owing to the presence of moisture the trees are large. Away from the damp forests the little *Iyngipicus gymnophthalmus* is common right to the coast at Kumuna.

At Galamuna, on the Kumbukkan river, I secured a *Brachypternus* that may prove to be a new species. It resembles *erythronotus*, except that the inner hind toe is only rudimentary, forming only a minute dactyle projection, terminating in an apiculate point that serves as a claw. My example—an adult ♀—measured 10½ in. in length: wing 5¼ in., tail 3½ in., bill (along ridge) 1½ in., tarsus 1 in. Unfortunately the skin of this bird got destroyed, so that I have been unable to compare it with Museum examples.

I have already hinted that the presence or absence of water governs the question of human distribution within the area under consideration, and I venture to think that the same applies, in some particulars, to the distribution of birds; thus, for instance, the common Black Crow (*Corvus macrorynchus*) occurs only where there are villages; nowhere did I find it in uninhabited forest areas. It was equally common at Kumuna on the sea coast and at Muppane—far inland—in a hilly country. The same might, with some curious exceptions, be said of our Sparrow, that I noticed was common at Pottuvil, Panawa, and Okanda on the east coast, but was absent at Kumuna, and equally absent from many of the smaller villages in the interior of the Vedda country.

The drying up for several months of the year of most of the streams naturally causes a restricted distribution among the

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

136

Kingfishers, but it is conceivable that this periodical flooding and drying of these streams initiates a form of migration that on a more extended scale, brought about by weather fluctuations in geological times, might indicate the impulse of migration in birds. Thus, reverting to the local migration incident to the drying up of large waterways, I noticed on the Kumbukkan river that *Alcedo iepida*, *Pelargopsis gurial*, and *Halcyon smyrnensis* were plentiful, while not one of these birds could be found on the Heda-oya—a river only a few miles to the north; the explanation being that the former stream is perennial, and the latter dry in the south-west monsoon. For the same reason *Ketupa ceylonensis* occurs at tanks that have water, and is absent where the opposite is the case. *Ketupa* is, therefore, to be found along the valley of the Kumbukkan in both monsoons, but only in the north-east on the Heda-oya.

As the time at my disposal was necessarily very limited I could do no more than note what was then to be found, so that a more studied verification of these observations becomes desirable in order to establish proofs of what might be called a local migration law. It is, however, rather striking that species of wide general distribution in the wet zone should show an erratic distribution in the dry, the key to the explanation being possibly found in water distribution. In that direction therefore we may anticipate room for the development of a definite form of migration, though its range may be comparatively limited.

I observed in the immediate vicinity of the Kumbukkan river that at night numbers of insects were attracted by a light, while in the dry country south-east of "Westminster Abbey" there was a comparative scarcity of what I might call lamp-followers.

At a spot midway between Kebilitte and Ellebubbura I had a unique opportunity of observing the effect of scarcity of moisture and its influence on insect life. I had seated myself under a tree for a few minutes, to rest after a hot march of about 15 miles. The jungle all round me appeared to be utterly faint with the drought, and I may add that I felt much the same myself. I was in a considerable state of perspiration, when I noticed a couple of butterflies hovering

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

136 quite close to me. Presently one of them lit on my wrist, and began sipping the moisture as it came from my skin. The second insect quickly followed exactly the same procedure on my slowly extending my arm.

At a small puddle, measuring about 2 ft. by 18 in., I found the whole of the damp ground covered with wasps sipping the moisture.

Some idea of the dryness of the locality can be judged from these instances, and I submit that animal distribution must be affected thereby.

137 The distribution of plants, not of direct value to man, moreover shows certain erratic conditions. The most striking instance of this is in the distribution of the Dipterocarps. At Monaragala, and a little to the eastward, our common Hora (*Dipterocarpus zeylanicus*) is moderately plentiful. From Liyangalla onwards towards the east it is absent, but to the north-east of Siyambala-anduwa, near the village of Newgalla, one finds fringes of *Vatica obscura* on the banks of the dry streams; in other words, there is an enormous belt of country the opposite sides of which have representations of this important order of trees, with no examples in the intermediate area.

On the other hand I found no examples of *Vatica obscura* to the south of Siyambala-anduwa on any of the streams I crossed.

Of the Dilleniaceæ, I found *Dillenia indica* on the higher reaches of the Heda-oya, and a few individual examples—probably introduced—towards Waragoda in the north and at Kumuna in the south-east.

Of the Anonaceæ, the usual dry-zone *Polyalthias* are very abundant. Both *Anamirta paniculata* and *Tinospora cordifolia* are abundant representations of the Menispermaceæ.

In the tanks where there was water, both *Nymphæa lotus* and *Nelumbium speciosum* are common Lotuses. Both roots [227] and bulbs of these plants are eaten.

In some of the chenas I found *Brassica juncea* grown with the other crops, but I could get no definite explanation why it was cultivated.

Of the Capparideæ, the typical *Capparis zeylanica* is plentiful. [262] Its fruits are eaten by the Veddas as well as the Tamils. I

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

APPENDIX B.

132

	Monaragala Hospital, 700 ft. altitude. Inches.	Mean for 15 Years. Inches.
January	3·13	7·51
February	·26	3·51
March	3·20	3·78
April	15·07	7·02
May	7·64	8·48
June	1·23	1·72
July	·70	3·09
August	3·33	3·72
September	2·47	4·41
October	4·88	12·72
November	8·74	9·80
December	10·33	10·18
Total	60·99*	70·91†

* 110 days for 1912. † 101 days.

APPENDIX C.

136

List of Birds observed in the Vedda Country during July, 1914, giving Local Distribution.

1. *Astur badius.* One seen at Guruhela.
2. *Accipiter* sp. (?). The Museum Collector obtained a ♀ Accipiter, which I am inclined to think is a new species to Ceylon. It was one of a pair that were engaged in building at the time it was shot. It possesses the characteristic long central toe, but in size it is much smaller than *A. nisus* or *A. virgatus*, with the breast boldly marked with dark smoke-brown streaks and blotches, and not barred. The second and third primaries also differ from the last mentioned, while the tarsus is also markedly stouter. My example was obtained at Newgala.
3. *Pernis cristatus.* Observed at Panawa and Bargura
4. *Spilornis cheela.* Observed at the base of the Monaragala hills, at Guruhela, Etmole, Panawa, and near Kebilitta.
5. *Haliætus leucogaster.* Observed at Panawa, Okanda, Lahugala, and Kumuna.
6. *Haliastur indus.* Common at Panawa and at Bargura.
7. *Falco peregrinus.* Nesting in the eastern cliff of "Westminster Abbey."

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

8. *Ketupa zeylonensis*. Heard at Muppane, Liyangolla, but only near places where there was water. 136

9. *Huhua nepalensis*. At Panawa I heard the cry of what I believe to be this, but I include it doubtfully.

10. *Scops giu*. Heard at Siyambala-anduwa.

11. *S. bakkamuna*. Heard at Danakirigalla, Ellebubbura, Muduwa, and Kumuna. I think there is no doubt about this being *bakkamuna*, though I did not actually obtain one.

12. *Glaucidium*. I heard these owls repeatedly at Panawa, Bargura, Danakirigalla, Ellebubbura, Muduwa, and Moramalpokunna, but unfortunately obtained none so as to determine the species, but judging by the note I believe the birds I heard were *Castanonotum*.

13. *Palæornis eupatria*. Distinctly scarce. Occur in the valley of the Kumbukkan.

14. *P. torquatus*. Kumbukkan valley, Uva boundary, Siyambala-anduwa, Manawela, Ellebubbura, and Liyangolla.

15. *P. calthropæ*. Common at Danakirigalla, some at Liyangolla, Muduwa, and Panawa.

16. *Loriculus indicus*. Seen at the Uva boundary near Siyambala-anduwa, and heard in the Kumbukkan valley.

17. *Iyngipicus gymnophthalmus*. I obtained two at Siyambala-anduwa. Common at Ellebubbura, Ampitiya, Kitulana, Kumuna, and east of Panawa. My examples are both ♀, and measure:—

(*a*) Length 4·75 in., tail 1·50 in., wing 3 in., bill ·54 in., tarsus ·50 in.

(*b*) Length 5·00 in., tail 1·50 in., wing 3 in., bill ·50 in., tarsus ·50 in.

18. *Chrysocolaptes stricklandi*. Plentiful at Lahugala. Occurs at Kurapan-oya, in Kumbukkan valley, Heda-oya valley, Danakirigalla, Ellebubbura, Ampitiya, and Etmole.

19. *Brachypternus*. I obtained, while going up the valley of the Kumbukkan river, what I have referred to in the text as possibly a new species belonging to this genus. The short, or, I should say rudimentary, inner hind toe is particularly striking.

20. *B. erythronotus*. Valley of the Kumbukkan, Panawa, and Bargura.

21. *Thereiceryx zeylonicus*. Occurs at Lahugala, Panawa, Kurapan-oya, Okanda, Kumuna, valley of the Kumbukkan, Bowela, and round "Westminster Abbey."

22. *Cyanops flavifrons*. Not particularly common. Found near Degalhela, Ellebubbura, Lahugala, Panawa, Okanda, Kumuna. Plentiful near Monaragala.

23. *Xantholæma rubricapilla*. Common all over the Vedda country.

24. *Cuculus sonnerati*. Observed in the valley of the Kumbukkan river.

25. *Coccystes jacobinus*. Not seen east of Muppana, where it is plentiful.

4: Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

136 26. Without having actually seen the bird, I venture to include a Cuckoo that may be identified by its monotonous and melancholy note, that represents the words "Captain Philpotts." It is common in the dry forests and plentiful near Maha-oya. I have spent considerable time and trouble in trying to obtain it, and while getting to within a few yards of the creature, I have always failed. I found it to occur at Etmole and the dry country towards Chimney Hill. Its exact identity is unknown to me.

27. *Eudynamis honorata*. Heard at Panawa.

28. *Phœnicophæs pyrrhocephalus*. Seen at the Uva–Eastern Province boundary, Kumbukkan valley, Siyambala-anduwa, but not near the sea.

29. *Rhopodytes viridirostris*. Scarce; only near Monaragala.

30. *Centropus sinensis*. Abundant right down to the coast.

31. *Harpactes fasciatus*. Common at Siyambala-anduwa; seen in the valleys of the Kurupan-oya and Kumbukkan river; not elsewhere.

32. *Anthracoceros coronatus*. Common in the valley of the Kumbukkan. Seen at Panawa and Bargura, at which last place I obtained two measuring:—

♂ Length 35·50 in., wing 12·85 in., tail 14 in, bill 7 in., tarsus 2·25 in.

♀ Length 33·50 in., wing 12·25 in., tail 12·25 in, bill 6 in., tarsus 2·30 in.

33. *Tockus singalensis*. At Lahugala, Kurupan-oya, Kumbukkan river. Comparatively a scarce bird.

34. *Ceryle varia*. Occurs at Panawa and the lower reaches of the Kumbukkan river.

35. *Alcedo iepida*. Common at Lahugala, Panawa, Kumbukkan river, Kurapan-oya, and near all the wet paddy fields round Monaragala.

36. *Pelargopsis gurial*. Common on the Kumbukkan river, at Lahugala, Panawa, Okanda, Kumuna, and lower reaches of Heda-oya.

37. *Halcyon smyrnensis*. Common at Pottuvil and down the coast to Kumuna, and in all places where flowing water is present.

38. *Merops philippinus*. These migrants had already arrived, and were plentiful at Lahugala, Kumuna, and at Muduwa. In the early part of August they had reached Muppane.

39. *M. viridis*. Occurs at Ullapola, Bargura, Lahugala, Panawa, Okanda, but is scarce towards the centre of the area involved.

40. *Tachornis batassiensis*. At Pottuvil, Okanda, and Kumuna.

41. *Collocalia fuciphaga*. Abundant, and nesting at Monaragala.

42. *Macropteryx coronata*. Common at Panawa and all down the coast to the Kumbukkan. I also found it sparingly at Siyambala-anduwa.

43. *Caprimulgus telaarti*. Heard in the Kumbukkan valley.

44. *C. asiaticus*. Common down the coast from Pottuvil to Kumuna.

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

136

45. *C. indicus*. Common down the coast from Pottuvil to Kumuna.

46. *Corvus macrorhynchus*. Common where there are inhabited villages only.

47. *Oriolus melanocephalus*. Common right to the coast.

48. *Graucalus macii*. Found at Ampitiya.

49. *Pericrocotus flammeus*. Common in the Heda-oya valley.

50. *Lalage sykesi*. Found at Muduwa, Kumuna, and plentiful up the Kumbukkan valley.

51. *Tephrodornis pondicerianus*. Heard at Pottuvil and at Lahugala.

52. *Dissemurus lophorhynus*. I suspect that this bird occurs, but not having actually shot one I include it doubtfully from Kumbukkan valley.

53. *D. paradiseus* (locally called Kudamahawaraliya) is very plentiful all through the Vedda country forest area. Unlike its relations in the Sabaragamuwa Province it does not associate with numbers of the *Malacocerci*. The following measurements of examples were obtained:—

♂ Length 17 in., tail 12 in.; wing 5·87 in., bill 1·37 in., tarsus 1 in.

♀ Length 13½ in., tail 8 in., wing 5·25 in., bill 1 in., tarsus 1 in.

54. *Bucanga leucopygialis*. Plentiful west of Siyambalanduwa.

55. *Terpsiphone paradisi*. Seen at Pottuvil, Panawa, Okanda, and in Kumbukkan valley.

56. *Hypothymis azurea*. Common. I found a nest of this species on the summit of "Westminster Abbey." It occurs comparatively sparingly in the Eastern Province.

57. *Rhipidura albifrontata*. See text.

58. *Oyornis tickelli*. Common at a place south-east of Kotiyagoda, and at Ellebubbura, Liyangolla, Etmole, and the base of "Westminster Abbey."

59. *Copsychus saularis*. Common up to the Heda-oya, but not seen east of "Westminster Abbey." Few at Lahugala, plentiful south of Pottuvil.

60. *Cittocincla macrura*. Abundant right to the coast. The local name is Sudu-waraliya.

61. *Thamnobia fulicata*. Comparatively scarce. Found breeding at Lahugala; occurs down the coast to Kumuna.

62. *Turdus spilopterus*. Heard in the high forest south of Degalhela, but nowhere else.

63. *Hypsipetes ganeesa*. Plentiful at Kotiyagoda, Heda-oya valley, Bowela, Etmole, and towards Monaragala.

64. *Iole icterica*. Common in the Heda-oya and Kurapan-oya valleys, but scarce north and east of Degalhela. Not seen west of Kodiyana.

65. *Pycnonotus luteolus*. Common right to coast.

66. *P. melanicterus*. Common in the river valleys, especially near Kumuna westwards.

4: Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

136

67. *P. hæmorrhus.* Common right to the sea.

68. *Chloropsis jerdoni.* Very scarce; only near Monaragala hills and at Pottuvil.

69. *Ægithina tiphia.* Not very common. Seen near coast line.

70. *Crateropus.* Common down the coast, but comparatively rare towards Siyambala-anduwa. I found a few at Bowela and towards Buddama.

71. *Pomatorhinus melanurus.* Heard at Panawa, Himitillanegalla, round "Westminster Abbey" and Muduwa, but *not* in the Kumbukkan valley.

72. *Alcippe nigrifrons.* Common at Lahugala, Kumuna. Breeding near Panawa and on summit of "Westminster Abbey," extending south to the Kumbukkan valley.

73. *Pellorneum fuscicapillum.* Common, but the birds from the region under consideration are distinctly paler than those from the wet districts.

74. *Orthotomus sutorius.* Common everywhere right down to the sea-side.

75. *Prinia valida.* Seen at Bowela, and in a piece of grass land at Karane. Heard at Lahugala and Okanda.

76. *Drymœca insularis.* (I am retaining Legge's species and name.) Seen only in the park lands south of Etmole.

77. *Cisticola cursitans.* Only seen at Newgalla in an abandoned field and at Panawa.

78. *Citta frontalis.* Heard at Siyambala-anduwa.

79. *Cinnyris lotenius.* Seen at Wattegama, Siyambala-anduwa, Pottuvil, down the coast to the Kumbukkan.

80. *C. zeylonicus.* Seen all down the coast from Panawa, but few only observed near "Westminster Abbey."

81. *Dicæum erythrorhynchum.* Seen at Lahugala, Ketulana, Pottuvil to Kumuna, but becoming distinctly scarce between the Kumbukkan valley and Monaragala.

82. *Zosterops palpebrosa.* Heard at Siyambala-anduwa.

83. *Hirundo hyperythra.* Common. I found its nest at Kebilitte. It is quite plentiful at Okanda.

84. *Passer domesticus.* Not generally common. I found it at Pottuvil, Panawa, Okanda, but not at Kumuna, on the coast; again at Bowela and Nambanna (few), while it is plentiful at Etmole and Muppane.

85. *Alauda gulgula.* Common.

86. *Ploceus baya.* Near Okanda I found several trees in which the familiar pendulous nests were in abundance, but in all cases these were last year's work. I looked in vain for this bird in the northern part of the Wedirata, where I suspect it occurs when the rice fields are in cultivation, but as that is not of regular occurrence, I assume that a local migration takes place.

87. *P. manyar.* I found this species at Lahugala, where, the tank being full all the year round, both rushes and sedges are available for nesting in.

88. *Uroloncha kelaarti.* Occurs near Monaragala, but I have no notes of it eastward of that place.

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

89. *U. malabarica*. Seen at Kumuna.

90. *U. striata*. Common. Plentiful in the Panawa rice fields, Kumbukkan valley, Wattegama, and Muppane. 1360

91. *Artamus fuscus*. Common at Barawaya, Ellebubbura, abundant at Pottuvil.

92. *Acridotheres melanosternus*. At Panawa and near coast, and plentiful at Monaragala, Wattegama; not generally common.

93. *Eulabes religiosa*. Common up the Heda-oya valley. Plentiful at Ellebubbura, Liyangolla, and the Kumbukkan valley, down to the coast.

94. *Columba intermedia*. From a description given to me I think this bird occurs at Okanda, but personally I did not observe it.

95. *Turtur suratensis*. Common throughout the whole of the Vedda country where there is any open land; especially common in fields.

96. *Chalcophaps indica*. Common. The variability of the bearing of the tail feathers is striking.

97. *Carpophaga ænea*, locally called Godabowa, is fairly common, especially in the valleys of the larger streams, such as the Heda-oya, the Kurapan-oya, and the Kumbukkan river.

The following measurements I took from examples shot at Newgala and the Kurapan-oya, respectively:—

♂ Length 15 in., tail 5·75 in., wing 8·25 in., bill 1·25 in., tarsus 1·12 in.

♂ Length 15·25 in., tail 6·00 in., wing 8·00 in., bill 1·25 in., tarsus 0·87 in.

98. *Osmotreron bicincta*. Common right down to the coast line, especially where ripe Banyan fruit is plentiful.

99. *O. pompadora*. Common like the last, but, perhaps, more abundant.

100. *Pavo cristatus*. I did not see a single trace of Peafowl in Uva. All down the coast from Pottuvil to the Kumbukkan it is common over a belt of country varying from 6 to 15 miles in width, but these birds appear to exclude themselves from high forests.

Near Lahugala I found cock birds more plentiful than hens, and at Bargura I saw a procession of eleven cock birds walking in single file down to a pool. Hens appear to be either solitary or more shy than the males, hence their seeming rarity.

101. *Gallus lafayetti*. Exceedingly common, and, like the last, the males are seemingly more common than the females.

There is much reason to believe that this species crosses with the village fowl, but evidence as to further intercrossing is obscure, as no definite examples of connected history can be obtained from a people to whom such a subject is of no interest. In the text reference has been made to distinct strains of domestic fowls that, it may be assumed, have developed without any definite human intervention, and it is beyond demonstration to show how these strains came to be established; but whether the variation arose from the cross-breeding of domestic birds with

4: Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

136 others of their own species, or by crossing an inbred stock with the wild bird, is equally open to question.

I am inclined to believe that the inbreeding of the domestic bird has been an important factor in the forming of specific strains, and these have again been varied by the crossing with the wild bird; hence in one strain we find a distinct difference in the *note*, while in another we find a close identity of general "build."

102. *Galloperdix bicalcarata*. I was able to make careful notes of the distribution of our Spur-fowl. I found it to occur at the foot of some low hills west of Siyambala-anduwa; again at the foot of Digalhella, at Danakirigalla, at the base of Westminster Abbey, near Ullapola, Nambana, Monaragala hills, Ampitiya; plentiful at Lahugala and at Kumuna. This last named place is the nearest point to the sea that I have traced this species. It is remarkable that in the plains the Spur-fowl does not appear to occur unless at the base of small hills; thus, while it is common at the foot of the Lahugala hills, it appears to be absent between that point and Siyambala-anduwa, where the country is flat.

103. *Turnix taigoor*. At Kumuna and in park lands near Etmole.

104. *Erythra phœnicura*. Common where there is water. I found it at Newgalla and Wattegama, confining its movements to small tanks in each instance. Plentiful at Monaragala.

105. *Porphyrio poliocephalus*. At Lahugala tank.

106. *Totanus stagnatilis*. Common in small numbers near backwaters and pools right through the country I explored.

107. *Numenius arquata*. I found it in the neighbourhood of the sand dunes near Panawa, where it might be considered plentiful.

108. *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*. On the tank at Lahugala.

109. *Himantopus candidus*. Very numerous round shallow lagoons at Okanda and near Panawa.

110. *Lobivanellus indicus*. Common, especially in flat damp ground.

111. *Glareola lactea*. I only once met with it at Panawa, where it appeared to be very plentiful.

112. A Tern, which I take to be *Sterna media*, is common along the coast. I found it frequenting both Arugam and Okanda bays.

113. A smaller species than the last, that I presume to be *S. sinensis*, I saw at Panawa only.

114. *Nettapus coromandelianus*. Abundant at Lahugala only.

115. *Dendrocygna javanica*. Plentiful at Lahugala and Panawa tanks. Breeding near Kumuna.

116. *Phœnicopterus roseus*. When I was surveying near the coast south of Panawa in March of 1907 I found a large flock of these Flamingos at one of the shallow lagoons, but on the occasion of my present visit in July I did not see a single example.

117. *Platalea leucorodia*. Seen at Okanda.

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

136

118. *Tantalus leucocephalus.* Seen at Kumuna.

119. *Anastomus oscitans.* Along the coast south of Pottuvil. Local name Gonbeli-kokka.

120. *Dissura episcopus.* Seen in numbers at Bargura.

121. A bird locally called "*Māno-kokka*" was seen by me at Lahugala, but I am uncertain if it is identical with *Leptopilus javanicus.*

122. *Xenorhynchus asiaticus.* I watched a pair at the mouth of the Kumbukkan river, seemingly feeding on fish, but I was unable to procure an example for more close identification.

123. *Ardea cinerea.* Near Panawa and at Bargura.

124. *Herodias alba.* Seen at Panawa and at Okanda, but doubtfully included here.

125. *Ardeola grayi.* Plentiful at Newgalla, Wattegama, and in wet fields round Monaragala.

126. *Ardeiralla cinnamomea.* Only seen near wet fields near Monaragala and the margin of the tank at Wattegama.

127. *Phalacrocorax carbo.* Plentiful in Panawa and Lahugala tanks.

128. *Plotus melanogaster.* Common; often found in stagnant river pools right in the heart of the forest.

129. *Pelecanus philippinensis.* Only seen in the large "villu" at Kumuna, where it is very abundant, and breeds there.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

Towards evening we came to certain gibbet-like structures which stood out against the sky in strange contrast to their surroundings. These were the draw-wells of a tobacco plantation many more of which we were to see in the course of our journey. Here our guide proposed we should pass the night; but not before he had secured for himself, as he afterwards did at every opportunity, as much tobacco as a campaign of casual, yet dignified beggary brought him.

Taking possession of one of the huts on the settlement we had emptied our boats and begun to cook when a smart shower descended to continue unceasingly throughout the night. We were in a bad way. The nine of us lay huddled in the narrow open shed at the mercy of the wind-driven rain, our nostrils worried by the narcotic odour of tobacco leaves, in all stages of desiccation, that hung from the roof like great bats.

We had but settled down when three dripping figures rushed in seeking shelter. Our boatmen facetiously remarked that they could see for themselves there was no room. But they lingered awhile enjoying the smells of our cooking and soon melted into the night to a kinder reception, we hoped, elsewhere. They were the owners of the shanty with which we had made so free!

It dawned superbly. The banks were covered with long lush grass that grew in a broad strip between the forest edge and the river. Spacious game trails, gashed out of the steep sides, and capable of accommodating even an elephant, led down to the water at intervals of every few yards. There was a patch of grass trodden by one of these monsters as he fed in the moon-lit rain. Even now, perhaps, he rested in the seclusion of some creeper-covered alcove at hand. Who so happy as he? Why, all:

A brace of teal flew overhead to some outlying reedy pool; a jungle cock crowed in the distance; from a swamp a cormorant cried; monkeys and large squirrels bustled in the branches; crimson-backed wood-peckers darted from tree to tree; swallows circled twittering melodiously; little birds gave music from every bough. The moan of doves, the boom of coucals, the cackle of king-fishers joined the chorus. And then, like the twang from a golden harp, the voice of the gorgeous oriole thrilled the ear.

Those notes of the jungle, so various, so apparently ill-assorted, withal so harmonious. It seemed as though Nature were but tuning her orchestra to some deep diapason of song the full development of which was not for human ears.

In the evening we found ourselves again in a ramshackle shed in a tobacco garden adjoining a rubber estate. Having bathed at a draw-well that took its water from the river, we settled to thoughts of jungle peace. The air, quick awhile with the vespers of roosting birds, was now hushed save for the trolling of a magpie-robin. Soon he too ceased. Cicadas made the forest hum. Then the night-jars, sweet harbingers of the dark, took up the song.

But what was this disquieting hum about us that momentarily grew? Mosquitoes! They assailed us in legions driving us towards the suffocating fumes of the large log fire we had built to keep off elephants.

After a fidgety meal I leapt into bed, hurriedly letting down the curtain—butter-muslin no less—and, sparing a thought of commiseration for my more luckless companions, closed placid eyelids in anticipation of sleep. The servants and boatmen, covered from head to foot, crouched as close to the fire as they dared, talking amiably by way of distraction. Only

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

But the structure he pointed to was very unconvincing, being riddled with breaches. Familiarity not artifice, we concluded, inured the tobacco-growers of the Mahaweli; and we could not but admire a fortitude that braved annoyance so extreme and sickness so sure in the interests of a little gain.

The advice we received, however, we turned to future account; and the next night found us camped amid the trees close to the water's edge, thereby escaping mosquitoes, it is true, but not elephants; for about midnight we were awakened by the snapping of branches around us. With shouting and shooting we drove the intruders away, but not before our chauffeur, muddled with sleep and terrified out of his wits, had slipped over a rope and nearly drowned himself in the swollen river.

Traces of elephants were abundant everywhere. As early as four in the afternoon we would see one or more of them standing out in the tall grass by the river border plucking up great trunkfuls of the luscious food.

In the morning bird life was plentiful. Here were five pea-fowl perched on a half-immersed snag; there a lonely egret in a secluded pool. Imperial pigeons, pied horn-bills, and darters, their eel-necks inelegantly bent at bayonet-like angles, flew about in numbers. Racket-tailed drongoes and scimitar-babblers sang entrancingly; barbets contributed a monotonous refrain. White-necked storks were seated on dead trees with the abstraction of philosophers. Little munias carrying streamers of grass flew across from bank to bank. The nests of noisy bayas hung like fruit from favoured trees.

No less interesting were the trees that engirt us. The ubiquity of green was only occasionally relieved by some small flower of vivid hue. Many of the trees were creeper-laden and formed arbours that might have homed the troops of Pan. Great *kumbuks** bent to the water, making delightful retreats for forest-lovers. Often the river eddied round an islet formed around some stricken tree. Massive lianas, heavy as the hawsers of a Titan, swung from dizzy pinnacles holding in twisted grip the fragments of strangled saplings. Everywhere were stark dramas of vegetable life:—Tremendous trees in the grip of some epiphytic *ficus* whose tentacles guttered and clung in live pythonic cords and bands. Yet a few years and the parasite would clasp the crumbling carcase of its host and stand itself a forest monarch. Such sights are perhaps less poignant in their *denouement* than at the inception, when a slender cord, an elfin thing, streaks daintily some magnificent giant whose life, incredible as it may seem, it is destined one day surely to claim.

Nor was there lack of human interest here. A group of trees, their dome-shaped contours, suggesting at a distance masses of tree-covered rock, attracted us one noon to rest in their shade. Exotic *ingasaman* or 'rain-trees' they proved to be, sole monuments of a wasted human enterprise; not another sign was there to show that a score of years previously a young coconut plantation had struggled for existence here. Elephants had destroyed the last of the palms years ago.

A sylvan siesta is no smooth affair. Minute ticks swarm in the dry leaves and getting on to you bide their time. At some untoward moment, on the march perhaps or in the dead of night, an agonising pain as from the stab of a red-hot needle will tell you that Mr. Tick has begun to feed. A snake may fall on you, leap towards your face, and wriggle

Terminalia glabra

8: Spittel D-8 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

The next noon we were on the river making easy passage with the current all in our favour, and travelling at ten times the speed we had laboured up. The boatmen who had spent the night on the bank looked as if they were afflicted with measles, so remorselessly had the mosquitoes handled them; and already one of them was shivering with malaria.

The heat of noon on the river was intense; and the splash of the oars or the sight of boys bathing at the draw-wells gave little appeasement. No bird had the heart to sing. As we passed, king-fishers flashed out of their cool retreats, coveys of stove-curlew ran up the shoals, and submerged wild buffaloes floundered up the bank. Clusters of yellow butterflies sipped moisture from the wet sand. A brahminy kite, its feet immersed in the shallows, whistled a warning to its mate that answered from afar.

At Kandakadu, where we met the first Vedda and his child, we spent the night; and, having two hours daylight to spare, decided to visit his village, in spite of being advised against it at that hour, as elephants were plentiful. The place was disappointing as regards Veddas; for, instead of the crude huts we hoped to see, we found well built houses with cattle and fowls in plenty; and the inhabitants, though they called themselves Vedda, were Tamils to all appearance. Nevertheless, we saw here a sight we would not have missed. In a field in full view of the village, and bordering a pool where women went for water, were three elephants belly-deep in the tall grass feeding with the indifference of cattle. The forest between this village and the river veritably teemed with traces of elephants.

At the Verugal junction we were greeted by a fine old Arab in baggy breeches and skull-cap. His house, a stout three-storied structure, was designed to stand the stress of floods. When the lower floors were submerged he would remain islanded on the upper which had mud floors to permit of cooking. On the rich silt left in his garden when the waters ebbed, he planted tobacco and the luxuriant vegetables he was now selling our boatmen. A stern man was Mohamed Sultan as he was called. When one of our party cut more sugar-cane than he intended taking, he was brought to his senses quickly enough with a single sentence. The aggrieved one afterwards confided to me that Mohamed was once a notorious robber of Kiniyai where he lived killing and eating other people's cattle!

We rapidly drifted toward the end of our journey, having done in a day and half downstream what we had taken seven days upstream to accomplish. As we reached the river-mouth the mosquito hosts were abroad, a storm threatened, but the fishers of the estuary were unconcernedly hauling their nets to a song.

61 Spitzel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

136 The grass in the glades was so tall that it covered us entirely. One's only chance of encountering game lay at the forest margins, or in the infrequent patches of burnt ground, overspread with the tender spicous shoots of which the chital are fond. Parrots and doves broke the stillness of the evening with their crooning. Startled quails whirred from our feet crying vociferous caution to their crouching young, and sometimes we would flush a *pathas kukula*, a species of partridge. But the note that accorded most with the brooding genius of the place, was the mournful, incessant 'ho-ho, ho-ho' of the *botse-kapua*, a cuckoo which, try as we might, we failed to see.

361 The next morning, provided with a small langur we shot on the way, we visited the Henebedde Veddas in their homes. Handuna's hut 231 stood at the foot of a densely wooded hill. There were a few cattle about which the Veddas tended for a consideration from the Sinhalese; and, what was even more unexpected, we found here a couple of hens with excellent broods; for, even the Sinhalese of these parts, as we learnt to our cost, kept no fowls. In these pursuits lie the nuclei that bid fair to tie nomadic hunters to fixed abodes.

342 Handuna's hut was a long low structure of wattle and bast thatched with straw, and partitioned into three or four dark rooms, occupied by his family and those of his sons-in-law. At one end of the building was an [281 open living-room in which we were entertained with deer skins for seats. 362] Slung from the eaves, at the other end of the hut, was a gourd, the mouth 231 of which was plugged with wax pierced with two small holes, through which bees busily entered and emerged. As I focussed my camera on this interesting example of Vedda apiculture, the enterprising showman naively remarked that a gentleman had once given him a rupee for that picture; but he might have spared the hint for the good it brought him.

343 Standing a little apart from the main hut, was a squat, kennel-like [84] structure for the segregation of women, during their monthly indis- [171] position. This feature is universal among jungle folk, whether Vedda, half-Vedda, Sinhalese, or Tamil. These sheds, barely sufficient for an individual to sit or lie crouched in, are often overgrown by jungle, and only crudely protected with bark-slats or deer skins; they have a fire-place at the open entrance; sometimes they are more hygienically built over trestles. Considering the poor protection they afford, and their nearness to the forest around, it must require some fortitude on the part of those occupying them, especially at night.

252 We now saw the monkey we had brought prepared for food. A slow fire was kindled in the garden; on this the carcase was placed, and turned over until well singed, emitting a most appetising odour. The smooth stone on which Handuna had up to now been seated, and which did service as seat or platter as occasion demanded, was requisitioned; the half-roasted animal was placed on it, disemboweled, and quartered with the blade of an arrow. A dog, that had been awaiting the opportunity, feasted on the offal in full view. The head was severed and split in half, [824 the limbs, dismembered, and the trunk broken flat. The various frag- 264] ments were then put back to roast. When all was ready, dainty morsels were served out to us on broad *kenda** leaves (the usual plates of these 262 people), with the polite request that we must eat first. A fragment of liver done to a turn, and a dainty hand with the charred little fingers

*Macaranga tomentosa.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1930) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

with men astride them, bows fitted with tridentate arrows, and all manner of cabalistic signs. Many an interesting discovery awaits here the spade of the antiquary.

How different is the appeal of ruins buried in the remote forest, in the setting with which Time and Nature have invested them, from those set out in the trim nudity of archaeologic display with tourist-ridden roads leading up to them.

Leaving Dolagalwella we turned up north, and soon entered the first of a series of great parklands we were now to traverse. These fine shooting grounds were probably centuries ago flourishing fields of paddy, fed by large artificial tanks, the crumbling embankments of which often outlie the glades. This is why, perhaps, the best game country in Ceylon to-day is to be found in the precincts of old kingdoms such as those of Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura and Tissamaharama.

We had put up for the night on a river bed many miles from the nearest settlement, when, to our surprise, a man armed with bow and arrows walked into camp. Approaching us without the least diffidence, he tapped us familiarly on the chest and looked us up and down appraisingly, speaking an incomprehensible jargon. Kombua, he happened to be, a Vedda of Dambana, a score of miles away. He affected ignorance of Sinhalese, and maintained the farce all the time he was with us; but if we wanted evidence that he was imposter in this, we had it the next morning when our cook accidentally dropped an ember on him: "This devil wants to burn me," he said in excellent Sinhalese, taken off his guard. A picturesque fellow was old Kombua, spare, sparse-bearded and beady-eyed. From his gaping ear-holes dangled loosely doubled strings of white beads. In a small bundle knotted round his waist was his baggage, and let into his waist-string was a small axe. He was alertness itself as he guided us the following day. His deep-set eyes took in everything. The flick of a leaf would petrify him on the instant, often with foot uplifted like a startled retriever; the faintest hum and he would search aloft, for honey is food to the Vedda.

The glades teemed with nesting green-pigeons. From many a low bough we started a bird, to discover its clutch of white eggs showing through the meagre nest. I was manoeuvring to add a couple of imperial pigeons to our menu, when of a sudden there was a flutter at my elbow and a jungle hen floated away into the cover of the bordering scrub. I had but to turn my head to discover her mottled eggs in a charred stump. The twigs and creepers about the nest gave it just that air of negligence that was its sole concealment. I debated with my companion as to the freshness of our find. "Oh, they contain young ones right enough; just feel how heavy they are," he said taking an egg in his hand with an air of expertness that disguised a tender heart. I had no pretensions to such skill, but knowing that a jungle hen lays some six to a dozen eggs and seeing that here were only three, decided to rob them, and justifiably as it turned out when we enjoyed them with bacon the following morning.

Coming to a stream we heard, closer than we had ever done before, the melodious mocking of that elusive cuckoo, *cuculus micropterus*. I asked Kombua to show it to me. "He cannot be seen," was the confident assertion of a Sinhalese. The Vedda awaited a repetition of the note, then peered into the dense foliage of a tall tree and in a trice was pointing

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5
Sinhalese AX4

to something; but it was long before I saw the bird, a veritable leaf among the leaves and more motionless than they.

The hilly jungles of central Ceylon echo, during certain seasons of the year, to this bird's incessant cry, the popular onomatopoeic renderings of which are, in English, "Captain Philpotts" and "Bring the tappal" and in Sinhalese "*Botuahappan*." Most people have heard, but very few seen, the shy author of these dolorous notes. There is a gruesome story associated with the bird:—A Sinhalese king once asked his dhoby, in order to test his marital fidelity, whether he would cut his wife's neck and bring him her head! "Oh! king," said the man falling at the monarch's feet, "even if you behead me I cannot do such a thing." The following day the king called up the dhoby's wife and made a similar request of her. She replied that she would do it. Going home she helped her husband with his bath, rubbed boiled limes on his head, and cooked him a good meal. Like a good wife she asked him to lay his head on her lap where he soon fell asleep. Then, with a knife she had in readiness, she cut his throat; and severing his neck, put the head into a pot, covered it with a cloth and carried it to the king. On the way she met a man who, singing, asked her, "What do you carry in the pot on your head?"

"I am taking *mes amba** to the king," answered the woman.

"Why cover it so carefully?" sang he.

"If I take them uncovered, wayfarers will ask me for them," she replied. "It is on a fine journey I go."

When she brought her gift to the king, he was incensed at her cruelty, and ordered her head to be struck off instantly. Ever after, has she gone about in the form of this bird, crying *botua-kappan* (cut the throat), as her one refrain.

While making our way through a tree-studded glade, we surprised two men carrying sacks of dried meat on their shoulders; through rents in the bags peeped unsavoury scraps of sambur, monkey and pig. Their first impulse on seeing us was to escape; for to shoot sambur legitimately, gun and game licences are necessary; and what money have they for these, who have barely the wherewithal to purchase the ammunition for their ramshackle muzzle-loaders.

When we camped, Kombua regaled us with Vedda songs of questionable taste chanted rapidly in a high nasal monotone, lengthened indefinitely by endless repetition, and accompanied in the last staves with a clapping of hands. To the suggestion that he should show his skill in archery he responded with alacrity; jumping up, he seized his weapons as if confident of skill. A fragment of paper, six inches square, placed fifteen paces away, was the mark. At the word he loosed his arrow. A clean miss! He walked up to the target and dashed it down in dudgeon, and nothing would induce him to shoot again. Archery is a lost art to the Veddas, though they still have considerable skill in fashioning bows and arrows. Jungles that echo to guns are no places for bowmen.

Kombua's farewell was as bizarre as his greeting of us. Tossing head and hands in the direction we were taking, and tapping us on the chest, he wished us good going in tones more peremptory than complaisant.

Quite a number of our carriers were half-Veddas. There was one whose constant occupation was to run his fingers comb-fashion through his upstanding hair scraping out vermin. His expression was of that thoughtful seriousness which is the surest mark of profound vacuity.

*A species of mango.

5: Spittel D-5 (da. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

flesh which they tore out and ate. They were afraid only of the buffalo and the dog. The Veddas, not very long ago, are said to have herded the last of them into a cave and destroyed them. Brute or man, persistent rumour in jungle countries brings the *Nittawo* within the realm of the probable. 776

Entering the forest at Siyambala Anduwa, and working north, we strove to maintain a route as far removed as possible from civilisation represented by the coast road on the one hand, and the Badulla-Batticaloa road on the other. 000

Two miles within the jungle was the old path, now over-grown and abandoned, from Badulla to Pottuvil. It led hereabouts through a narrow pass guarded, it is said, a few generations ago by the Karande Hela Vedda who, having fenced it across, levied toll on travellers. Intercepting, as he did, a trade route from the interior to the coast, we may be certain he made a good thing of it, getting his share both of the *kurrukkan*, maize, vegetables and fruit of the *Vanni*, as well as of the paddy, salt and dry fish of the Coast. 173

Kandanketiya, nine miles from Siyambala Anduwa, boasts an ancient temple of the era of Dutugemunu. We found it in the keeping of a doddering priest of eighty, who showed us round, all the while muttering "hu-hu, hu-hu," his only form of comment. His bed-room, dark, airless and dirty, was better adapted to mice and spiders than human beings. A great brass spittoon, emptied he told us once in two weeks, was the proudest thing there. A stupendous bo-tree, planted by himself, mocked with its vigour the withered frame of him who had tended it. Throwing open the doors of his little temple, without much ado he bade us enter the holy of holies, and pointed proudly to pictures of *devas* and harpies, half spurred-fowl half woman, who he confidently asserted lived in the Himalayas. Incidentally he indicated a money-box on the altar. But no sooner were our donations secure than his interest in us rapidly declined, reaching its climax when we told him we were going: "All right, go," he said, settling down comfortably on his bed. 172

A hornbill flying repeatedly to a large tree attracted our attention. Perching itself wood-pecker-wise on the trunk, it fed the occupant of a hole there with berries which it brought out of its crop one by one. We were told this was the male feeding the female he had deprived of feathers and shut up in the hole. We suggested there might be young. "Not so," said a woman; "where then are the feathers and droppings at the root of the tree?" Here was an opportunity to test the truth of gossip we had heard regarding the domestic amenities of hornbills. A man was sent up to the nest. Squeezing his hand through the narrow opening he produced an egg; then seized something by the beak, and unsuccessfully tried to pull it through. With an axe he enlarged the hole and soon handed down to us a veritable travesty of a bird. Scared out of her wits, voiceless, featherless, with half-opened beak, she flapped pathetic wings and tumbled ludicrously about in attempts to escape. She was obviously unfit for existence in the outer world and we returned her to her dark abode. Rumour was right, the male hornbill took no risks. 136

Bowala village lies at the northern end of Westminster Abbey. Buried as we were in the forest depths, we had not seen the hill since leaving the heights of Haputale. Suddenly the leviathan bulked over the trees. "There, that is why it is called Govinda Hela*," said our guide pointing 361

[103]

*Goa inda hela—rock where the monitor lizard is.

361 [103] to a cleft fragment of stone resembling a giant lizard crawling up the sheer face of the rock.

[241] We found Bowala deserted. The young coconut and areca palms, plantains, sugar-canes and pine-apples there were choked with grass and lantana. The huts were falling to pieces and leaked like sieves as we found to our cost when a shower overtook us; the grass thatch, ruined [136] by white ants, was the home of innumerable rats, brahmin-lizards and poisonous *karawalas** that hung head-down from the rafters ready to strike.

221 The desolate state of the hamlet is explainable by the *chena* life of the people. In December, as the crops ripen, they forsake their homes for the shacks of the *chena*, leaving perhaps an aged couple behind. In April, when the crops of *kurrukkan* and maize have been taken, they return to the village to repair their huts and wean back to life such plants as have survived the inroads of wild animals and weeds. In July, *chena* land is leased again; and so the wasteful routine is repeated. 621 A hamlet occupied for six months and abandoned for six has not much chance of headway. If the population of a village is at all numerous, there are sufficient people to occupy both *chena* and village, without detriment to either; if the community is very small they remain *chena* dwellers with no permanent homes; if intermediate, we find the state of things at Bowala. In favoured places a mere nucleus of human beings swells in time to a thriving and populous village. But in the insalubrious *Vanni* privation and ignorance keep the numbers low. Two dwindling villages may combine to save one from extinction. Often a place populous to-day is a wilderness to-morrow and *vice versa*. This is typical of the kaleidoscopic way the forest hamlets change. Names so fine on maps—Illukpitiya, Mahaella, Embillene—are found when reached to be derelict; a crumbling hut perhaps hidden in jungle, or a hardy tamarind or palmyrah the sole witness of vanished homes.

101 Bowala folk are better jungle men than many farther inland. Though [262] far from fastidious in their choice of meats, for they eat the mongoose and rat, they abhor the porcupine, sure mark of Vedda ancestry. They [287 fashion bags of beaten *riti* bark and carry pouches of monkey skin that 287] ladies might envy. Their bed-frames are spanned with sambur-hide, 415 their powder flasks are the dried scrota of sambur. A monkey skin, [534] stretched over a coconut shell fitted with handle, screw and string, and manipulated with a small bow, serves them as a violin out of which they 224 scrape mournful disharmonies. They snare the smaller animals, such as the hare, pangolin and chevrotan, with *habbakas* or weighted frames poised over passages used by these animals; we saw one of these set for 222 chevrotan with a bundle of urine-drenched leaves for bait. Some among 481 them could brave the formidable heights of Westminster Abbey in quest of the combs of the rock bee—the most hazardous of jungle pursuits.

000 We spent the night in a large cave at the base of Westminster Abbey and made the ascent next morning, replenishing our water bottles at a small basin formed by the buttressing roots of a rock-tamarind and rejoicing in the grandiloquent name, for so trivial a thing, of *Kothuru-pathaha* (gnat-water-hole).

It had rained all night and there was still a drizzle. Squeezing through crevices, crouching through low caves, climbing trees, clinging to rough

*Small venomous snakes.

5. NESTS AND HIVES

This is the time to climb the steep;
Up through the shadowy woods to grope,
Over the stones where the lichens creep,
On to the crag that crowns the slope;
To the wild bees stronghold hushed in sleep.

J. STILL

NESTS

136 222 IN dark fearsome caverns, and down the sides of dizzy ravines, the little edible-nest swiftlet builds its dainty nest fashioned of hardened saliva and moss. Those who think they know better will tell you that the all but invisible specks, sometimes seen high away in the empyrean at dusk, are flights of these birds on their way to the sea to gather salt foam with which to build.

122 [439] [373] [417] One of the favourite pursuits of the Veddas is the collecting of these nests for barter. They call the birds *kuduharayas* (nest-makers) and their nesting caves *kudu galges*. These caves are often deep gloomy recesses only entered with lighted candles (made by squeezing a column of bees-wax round a central wick of cloth or bark) to scare away the scores of poisonous snakes (*karawalas* and *mapilas*) that gather there to eat the eggs and young. Sometimes the nests stud the steep sides of narrow gorges, and are then taken by the aid of cane ladders let down from above.

The nesting-places are a secret the Veddas guard closely. When they took me on one of their expeditions it was on the condition that no bearers came. A hard climb brought us to near the summit of the tree-covered mountain side. "*Cho-ho-ho*," shouted the Veddas as a warning to possible bears. The approach to the cave was over-run with *aralu-wel* (used for bows) and *niyande* (of which waist strings are made). The cave itself, surmounted by an enormous rock the fall of which seemed imminent, was dark and stifling; and it was quite a time before one could discern the cup-shaped nests that clung in clusters to the vaulted roof. A Vedda handed me a parent bird he had trapped, a tiny-beaked, brownish thing, with sweeping wings, black feet and unswallow-like tail. It was quite a time too before one realised that there was a commotion in the air, and that little wraith-like forms were flitting in and out in sore distress "Swish, swish; wing, wing; twit, twit; kisiri, bisiri; takara, takara; kata, kata, kata," as from fairy castanets, came the barely audible sounds. Outside, these were louder, "Chara-chiris, chara-chiris; che-week, che-week, che-week," they twittered in futile resentment. But to these sounds the ruthless despoilers were deaf, as, mounted on heaps of stones, they scraped away with knife or arecanut cutter the trim nests from their tenacious attachments, leaving only those with eggs behind, lest the colony be killed outright. On a boulder near by [252] was a fire-place where the young had been roasted, as Kauwa of Divulana had described.

[p. 86]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

HIVES

There are five varieties of honey bee in Ceylon :—The large *bambara* (*Apis dorsata*) that builds huge combs of very pure wax on bare hill sides and the large branches of lofty trees ; the *mee massa* (*Apis indica*) sweetest honey bee of all, whose combs are to be found in hollow trees, rock-clefts and within ant-hills ; the *dandual massa* (*Apis florea*), the smallest honey-bee in the world, that hives on rocks and boughs ; the *kanava massa* (Rosin or Dammar bee) a docile, stingless, friendly little creature whose long black combs within tree crevices yield a delicious, if heady, honey ; the *kotha massa*, an even smaller species, whose puny comb is hardly worth the taking. 222 136

Kanava and *kotha* combs are available all the year round ; they are the *pathinchiharayas* or stayers. If the Vedda is hungry it is for one of these he goes at a pinch. The *bambara* and *mee massa*, the most abundant honey makers, are seasonal in their habits ; and June and July are the great honey months ; the fruit season synchronising with this, marks these months as the festive time of the jungle ; then the Veddas leave their homes for caves and stream beds, take their fill, and have a surplus for barter. 222 [439]

On the flavours of honey the Veddas are connoisseurs. They can tell by tasting a comb the flower or medley of flowers that contributed to its making. That honey is relished most which prevails when the *mora*, *veera* and *galseembela* are in bloom. [151 262]

Honey gathering is the master art of the Vedda. Supreme as he is in other jungle crafts, he is supremest in this. As he travels through the forest he is alive to the faintest hum, and no hive, however concealed, escapes him. His adroitness in tracking a bee to its lair is well described in a delightfully euphonious song they have (beginning, *Thomba, thomba Gomba me-na-na*), that tells of a Vedda Thutha who goes on the honey quest with his brothers Gomba and Naga. Thutha leads in the trail of a particular bee ; and as he goes he sings to his brothers, indicating various trees in which bees are busy ; but not decoyed by these, and with his eye steadily on the bee he first sighted, he follows it, till eventually it guides him to its hive within the skull of an elephant—*kolanathe gatche* (tree without leaves) as he quaintly describes. [533]

The taking of any hive, other than that of the rock *bambara*, is a very simple thing for the Vedda. All he does is to climb the tree, steady himself at the hole containing the comb, and blow into it to drive the bees away. Then with his axe he enlarges the opening sufficiently to enable him to introduce a hand and secure the cache, stopping every now and then to blow inside or to slap an offending bee. He eats the comb at his perch, grubs and all, throwing down fragments to those below.

The *bambara* comb is quite a different proposition. These great bees build high on the precipitous sides of rocks ; their security lying not in their seclusion but in their inaccessibility. These hives are the prize of the bold and skilful only. A dangling cane at Westminster Abbey gave us some idea of the daring of the enterprise. To reach the combs ladders of vines are lowered from the summit of the rock ; and down these the collector descends ; as this does not bring him within arm's length of the hives, he has usually to rely on the use of a long stake. Sometimes [417 481]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5
Sinhalese AX4

CHAPTER VII

BINTENNE

THE pass at Kadugannawa was thronged with bartering humanity. Being Sunday, it was market day, and the occasion served well to help us lay in a good stock of tobacco and betel, the best passport to the wild interior.

On through Teldeniya, whose cocoa plantations teem with snails that straggle over the road to explode under our car-wheels, and then, after Urugalla, we climb the Nugatenne gap and, skirting the Dumbara valley, attain beautiful wind-swept Madugoda. So far among the hills. From here it is a sudden drop to the Mahaweli and the wilderness beyond. We have left Madugoda but a little way when, at a turn, there suddenly opens before us a magic sea of misty greenery broken by hill ranges; there stand many blue mountains we know, Kokagalla, the dancing rock of the Veddas, and Friar's Hood faint and far; and there gleam a river and a tank; the former the Mahaweli, the latter placid Horabora Wewa traditional lake of Vedda lands.

The descent from the hills here is perhaps the most precipitous in all Ceylon; we drop some two thousand feet, and negotiate eighteen elbow bends within four miles; then, skirting the base of the mountain we come to the ferry of Weragantota and cross the Mahaweli in canoes to Alutnuwara, a fever-stricken place; whoever sojourns here even a few days invariably pays the penalty.

A quaint old town is Alutnuwara, or Bintenne as the jungle dwellers call it. Cosy homes and boutiques nestle under shady trees. Chained monkeys and caged parrots are ubiquitous and may be purchased for a song. Laden *tavalam* teams rest here on their way to the interior. It being April, every tree has its nesting bird—bee-catchers, bulbuls, drongos, coppersmiths and all the rest of them; hungry little squirrels cheep spasmodically for food; song fills the air.

Scattered about the place one is surprised to find old cannon. Those who see them for the first time frame visions of an era when ancient Sinhalese kings built these in foundries, and fed them with powder made from sulphur and nitre available in the neighbouring hills. But we may safely assume that firearms were unknown in Ceylon prior to the coming of the Portuguese. What then is the story of these brave things that lie in a ditch here, set off a doorway there? They were brought here, according to some, from the East coast by the English in their attempts to take Kandy; but finding the mountain barrier impassable they abandoned them here. The more likely explanation, however, is that they are a survival of the time when Alutnuwara was a military station after the Kandyan rebellion of 1817, "the last great occasion on which the English forces were arrayed in hostility against the natives of any portion of Ceylon."* To prevent a repetition of rebellion, a

*Emerson Tennent.

V 133
V 103
136
S 174
[p. 91]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5
Sinhalese AX4

and terrified they stood around the border. Then did the Saviour cause the pleasant Giridipa (Highlands) to come here near to them, and when they had settled there, he made it return to its former place. Then did the Saviour fold his rug of skin; the devas assembled, and in their assembly the Master preached them the doctrine. The conversion of many kotis of living beings took place and countless were those who came into the precepts of duty. The prince of the devas craved of him something to worship. The Conqueror, who had pure and blue black locks, passing his hand over his head, bestowed on him a handful of hairs. And he, receiving this in a splendid golden urn, when he had laid the hairs on a heap of many coloured gems, seven cubits round, piled up at the place where the Master had sat, covered them over with the thupa of sapphire and worshipped them.

"When Sambuddha had died, the thera Sarabhu, by his miraculous power, received, even from the funeral pyre, the collar bone of the Conqueror and brought it to Lanka and laid it in that same cetiya.

"The king Dutthagamini, dwelling there while he made war upon the Damilas (Tamils) built a mantle cetiya over it eighty cubits high. Thus was the Mahiyangana-thupa completed."

Barely four miles from Alutnuwara is the beautiful tank of Horabora Wewa whose vast waters have been cunningly trapped by a great earth work or bund, amidst a natural barrier of surrounding hills. As one sits here of an evening and looks across with field-glasses to the wilder opposite shore, small herds of deer may be seen feeding on the grassy edge between forest and lake; and in the drought, herds of elephants come to the water. White cranes fly overhead to roost on the bordering trees at dusk. Placed as it is in the heart of the Vedda country, this tank has long been associated with the Veddas. To-day only a few very destitute families of half-Veddas are to be found at Malgoda on the borders of the tank, living in the crudest of shelters, and feeding for the most part on the seeds of lotus pods (*olu*).

By an ancient sluice cut out of stone,* the tank-water is conducted along a channel to a wide stretch of paddy fields, now mostly in disuse owing to the paucity of the population. This brimming waterway, its grassy banks studded with beautiful trees, affords many a delightful picture, especially where the lotus thrives with its large, snow-white blossoms and no less beautiful leaves be-diamonded with sparkling droplets of water. Here halcyons fish all day. Up to recent years the tank itself was covered with lotus; but now, for some reason or other, there is none; and when no breeze stirs the glassy waters at midday, they reflect an ever changing panorama of dazzling clouds only broken where a darter or cormorant gambols.

It is not surprising that so beautiful a tank should have inspired a fine poem, of which I have attempted a poor translation that does scant justice to the euphonious idioms, the long vowel cadences, the alliterations, and rhymes of the Sinhalese original.

*Tradition has it that two giants (*yodhayas*) sat here on opposite sides of a crack in the great rock, and each, seizing that part on which he was seated with his hands, and thrusting with his foot against the other, wrenched the rocks apart, making an outlet for the water!